"The Dreams of Rukn al-Din al-Wahrani: Between the Enchantment of the Fantastic Narrative and Satirical Criticism"

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Date of submission: 01/10/2025 *Date of acceptance: 05/11/2025* *Date of publication: 27/12/2025*

***Abstract**:*

The manamat of Rukn al-Din al-Wahrani are among the most significant literary texts that blend fantastical narrative with satirical critique. Al-Wahrani employed dreams as an imaginative framework to address social and political issues in a mockingly satirical style. This approach gave his texts a unique character that combines profound criticism with entertaining fantastical storytelling. His writings go beyond mere amusement to become a critical mirror reflecting the realities of his era through refined literary expression, which explains their enduring relevance to this day.

Based on the above, we pose the following research question:

How did satirical critique and fantastical narrative contribute to making Rukn al-Din al-Wahrani's maqamat more compelling and impactful?

***Key words**: Rukn al-Din al-Wahrani; The manamat; Dreams; fantastical narrative; satirical critique.*

1. Introduction:

Rukn al-Dīn al-Wahrānī's *Manāmāt* (Dreams) represent a singular moment in the trajectory of classical Arabic prose, arguably constituting one of its most complex and innovative models. Within this work, a virtuosic fusion of fantastical narrative and biting satirical critique is achieved. The entire edifice rests upon a narrative structure engineered to provoke both wonder and disquieting introspection, compelling the reader to occupy the precarious threshold between the plausible and the patently absurd. For al-Wahrānī, the dreamscape was never a mere narrative convenience; it was a strategically licensed territory for subversion. Through the liberating ambiguity of this medium, he performs a vivisection of his society's ossified realities, exposing with clinical precision the grotesque underbelly of its corruption and the paradoxes it chose to ignore.

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And all this, he accomplishes under the veil of a sardonic wit that simultaneously indicts and delights.

The brilliance of al-Wahrānī's project lies in this very strategic mobilization of the fantastic. By situating his critique in the inherently illogical and ambiguous realm of dreams, he deftly sidesteps the perils of direct, realist condemnation. But what function do these fantastical elements—be it conversing beasts, inverted social orders, or scenarios of sheer absurdity—truly serve? They operate as a powerful allegorical lens, refracting and magnifying the follies of the age to grotesque proportions. This act of making the familiar strange forces it into the light for critical reassessment. The dream framework, therefore, furnishes him with a kind of discursive immunity, sanctioning a level of candor that would have been untenable, if not perilous, in another form, while enriching the text with profound symbolic resonance.

Consequently, a distinct duality comes to define al-Wahrānī's literary universe. At one level, the narratives captivate, their imaginative force and sharp wit providing immediate aesthetic pleasure. Yet, their teleology aims for something far more significant. These dreams relentlessly open new vistas for contemplating timeless human and social maladies: the chronic abuse of power, the pervasive specter of religious hypocrisy, the systemic flaws of the judiciary, and the sheer caprice of human nature itself. This deeper purpose elevates the work far beyond simple diversion, cementing it as a coherent and strikingly enduring critical discourse. Sealing this intellectual substance is an exceptional stylistic sensibility, one defined by its linguistic acuity, a razor-sharp irony, and the narrative charm of a voice that perfectly balances poetic grace with a satirist's bite.

It is this very fusion—where the allegorical power of the fantastic serves a trenchant critical vision, all delivered with unparalleled stylistic charm—that has secured the lasting literary impact of al-Wahrānī's *Dreams*. They are not mere historical artifacts but living texts whose exploration of the corruptions of power and society resonates with a timeless quality. His work remains a testament to the power of literature to use the mask of fantasy to tell the most truthful and unsettling stories about reality itself.

How did the interweaving of The Fantastic Narrative and Satirical Criticism contribute to imparting a distinctive character and expressive power to Rukn al-Dīn al-Wahrānī's Dreams?

1.1.First: Rukn al-Dīn al-Wahrānī

Abū ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Muḥarriz ibn Muḥammad al-Wahrānī, nicknamed Rukn al-Dīn and, it is said, Jamāl al-Dīn, was one of the learned and witty men (Ibn Khallikan, 1978, p. 385). Dr. Yaḥyā Buʿazīz states of him: he was an Algerian scholar who lived in the sixth century AH / twelfth century CE; his year of birth is not known, and it has been asserted that he was ascribed to Wahrān, although we do not know whether he was actually from there or from some of the small neighboring villages (Bouaziz, 1995, p. 183).

Ibn Khallikān's assessment of the judge from Wahran (Oran) offers a profound insight into the genesis of a unique literary persona, born from the crucible of social and intellectual alienation. He states that the judge "was one of the witty judges who came from his homeland to the Egyptian lands in the days of Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn, may God have mercy on him." Upon his arrival, he faced a formidable Cairene literary establishment. "When he entered the Egyptian lands, the virtuous qāḍī and the scribe ʿImād al-Dīn al-Isfahānī perceived that he was not of their social rank and that his

temperament did not accord with their circles." This marginalization became the catalyst for a strategic and brilliant transformation. In a calculated act of literary subversion, "he abandoned the path of seriousness and adopted the path of jest."

This turn was not a frivolous abandonment of intellectual rigor, but a sophisticated adoption of satire as a shield and a weapon. Through this new guise, he could critique the very circles that excluded him. His supreme innovation was the literary form of the dream narrative: "He invented the dreams (manāmas), and likewise composed the famous letters attributed to him, which are numerous in people's hands." This genre proved to be a masterstroke, affording him unparalleled creative freedom. The dreamscape became a liminal space where the surreal could interrogate the real, allowing for pointed social commentary veiled in allegory and fantasy. These works "indicate the lightness of his spirit, the delicacy of his pen, and the perfection of his wit," qualities that demonstrate a mastery of prose, where humor is interwoven with sharp, critical observation. The dream framework allowed him to deploy irony and parody with devastating effect, dissecting the pretensions and power dynamics of his time. As Ibn Khallikān concludes with superlative praise, this innovation reached its zenith in his most celebrated work: "Were there nothing in them but The Great Dream, it would have sufficed him, for in it he achieved every sweetness; were it not for its length, I would have mentioned it." (Ibn Khallikan, 1978, p. 385).

He then continues by saying that al-Wahrānī traveled in several lands and resided in Damascus until his death, may God have mercy on him. Al-Wahrānī: with a fatḥa on the wāw, a sukun on the hāʾ, a fatḥa on the rāʾ, and after the alif a nūn — this nisba indicates origin from Wahrān, a large city in the region of Qayrawān, situated two days' journey from Tlemcen and on the northern sea; it produced a group of eminent scholars. The aforementioned al-Wahrānī moved between countries and took up the pulpit in Badāriyya, a village at the gate of Damascus in the Ghūṭa. (Ibn Khallikan, 1978, p. 384)

As for ʿAdel Nūbayd, he is known as Muḥammad ibn Mahraz ibn Muḥammad al-Wahrani, Rukn al-Dīn Abū ʿAbdallāh. His craft was composition; he excelled in wit and satire. He was born in Oran and journeyed to the East, passing through Ṣafliyya. He entered Damascus on the festival of Nūr al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn Zankī, then visited Baghdad and returned to Damascus. It is said that he served as the preacher (khaṭīb) of the Jāmiʿ of Dāriyya. He visited Cairo in the days of Sultan Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī, where he met al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil, ʿImād al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī, and others. He then returned to Dāriyya and died there. (Nuweihid, 1980, p. 350) He died in the year 575 AH in Dāriyya and was buried at the gate of the tomb of Shaykh Abū Sulaymān al-Dānī. May God have mercy on him.

1.2.Second: Al-Wahrani's Maqāmāt

Within the landscape of Arab satirical heritage, Rukn al-Dīn al-Wahrani emerges as a figure of undeniable significance, having cultivated a literary legacy marked by a distinctively jocular and incisive style. His writings, which serve as a potent reflection of a critical spirit and a caustically observant perspective on reality, have been bequeathed to us in a collection of varied literary forms. This corpus, encompassing letters (rasāʾil), virtuosic prose narratives (maqāmāt), and fascinating dream-accounts (manamāt), defies a precise chronology of composition, leaving its compilation during or after his lifetime a matter of scholarly conjecture. The fluidity of this collection is further mirrored in the multiplicity of its titles across manuscripts and sources; it is variously catalogued as "Rasāʾil al-Wahrani," "Manāmāt al-Wahrani," or even "Maqāmāt al-Wahrani" and "Manshūʾāt al-

Wahrani," and has surfaced under designations as disparate as "Dalīl al-Tarrasul" and "Jalīs kull ẓarīf Wahrānī." (Bouaziz, 1995, p. 187)

This body of work commands a truly distinguished position in the annals of Arabic artistic prose, possessing intrinsic qualities that elevate it to a premier rank. Indeed, how many texts from the early Arabic tradition can genuinely claim the rare fusion of charm, intellectual acuity, and the kind of vivid, personalizing touches that so indelibly embellish their author's personality? Al-Wahrani's writings achieve this with remarkable flair. Classical critics themselves were compelled to acknowledge his merit, recognizing not just his technical skill but the very lightness of his spirit and the agile grace of his style. This acclaim is particularly evident in the reception of *The Great Dream*, a piece that Ibn Khallikān extolled, asserting that al-Wahrani not only invented the genre of dream-narratives but also authored the celebrated letters attributed to him—works widely circulated that "testify to the lightness of his spirit, the delicacy of his entourage, and the perfection of his wit." In a definitive statement of praise, Ibn Khallikān concluded, "Were there nothing of his work but *The Great Dream*, it would suffice him, for he achieved in it every sweetness; were it not for its length, I would have quoted it." (Ibn Khallikan, 1978, p. 385)

Rukn al-Dīn al-Wahrānī's literary corpus, particularly his dream narratives (*manamāt*) and picaresque assemblies (*maqāmāt*), serves as a poignant mirror to the socio-political realities of his time. Among the principal issues addressed by al-Wahrani in his dream-narratives are the corruption of the judiciary, the degradation of values, nepotism, class disparities, social maladies, and other matters that any discerning reader can infer. This thematic focus aligns with the broader tradition of the *maqāmah* genre, which often employed satire and wit to critique societal ills. Al-Wahrani also set forth his positions on certain political issues, including the conflicts among the Umayyads, the Shiʿa, the Sufis, the Fatimids, and the Ayyubids, and so forth. (Saadali, 2012, p. 246)

Al-Wahrani's mastery of the *maqāmah* form would have allowed him to veil his critiques in eloquent and aesthetically pleasing prose, a common feature of the genre that often utilized rhymed prose (*sajʿ*) and intricate rhetorical devices to engage and captivate the reader. Through the likely use of a roguish and witty protagonist, a hallmark of the *maqāmāt*, al-Wahrani would have been able to voice subversive and critical perspectives on the prevailing political and social order with a degree of impunity. His dream narratives, in particular, offered a unique literary space for exploring sensitive political dynamics and expressing dissent in a symbolic and allegorical manner.Within the phantasmagorical setting of the manamāt, a rich milieu unfolded for astute, allegorical dissections of the fraught dynamics between the medieval Islamic world's preeminent dynastic and religious authorities. Was this merely a literary device? On the contrary, al-Wahrani's contributions—spanning his manamāt and maqāmāt—wield a distinctive style that does far more than simply augment the tradition of Arabic prose; they fundamentally enrich it.

These texts present novel trajectories for scholarly inquiry while simultaneously offering any reader intellectually stimulating narratives that rival the aesthetic and conceptual merit of the tradition's most canonical works. Consequently, al-Wahrani's corpus profoundly illustrates literature's capacity not merely to mirror the society from which it emerges, but to actively interrogate, mold, and critique that very reality through a sophisticated deployment of literary artifice.

1.3.Third: Al-Wahrani and The Great Dream — Figurative and Satirical

In the rich tapestry of satirical Arabic prose, the *manamāt* of Al-Wahrani emerge as a particularly vibrant thread. Dr. ʿUmar ibn Qayya posits a compelling argument that following al-Ḥarīrī, the most significant contributor to this literary field was, in fact, the innovative Algerian writer Ibn Mahraz al-Wahrani during the fifth/seventh century AH (twelfth CE). What set al-Wahrani apart? It was his singular ability to dissect the multifaceted political, religious, cultural, social, and economic tissues of his era through an exceptionally elevated and captivating prose. This unique style, brimming with a satirical wit and a spirit of mockery, was not confined to his *maqāmāt*; rather, it saturated his letters and dream-narratives, which themselves are an inventive embodiment of the *maqāma* form (Bin Qina, 2007, pp. 20-21).

Rukn al-Din al-Wahrani was able to confront al-Hariri; he also succeeded in inventing a distinct narrative form when he turned to the dream as a means of expressing the phenomenon of the dream and its underlying reality. Al-Wahrani excelled in deploying visions and dreams as a medium through which his critical self stirs and exposes the falsity of religious, political, and social authority in his era, within a fantastic mode that blends wit and irony. The Great Dream is one of the most prominent examples of al-Wahrani's use of the art of the dream as an instrument for conveying his biting critical opinions, where he fuses imagination and satire to reveal societal contradictions and defects.

In a masterful display of literary ingenuity, "The Great Dream" (al-Manām al-Kubrā) by Rukn al-Din al-Wahrani unfolds not merely as a text, but as a theatrical stage for intellectual and social critique. It takes the form of an elaborate allegorical letter addressed to his friend, al-Hafiz Jamal al-Din al-ʿAlimi, conceived as a rebuttal to a prior letter of reproach. Al-Wahrani's response transcends simple correspondence, materializing as a lengthy, meticulously polished composition set within the cosmic drama of the Day of Judgment, all witnessed in a great dream (Al-Wahrani, 1968, p. 17). This visionary framework grants him a unique license, allowing for a form of discourse that is simultaneously personal and universal, immediate yet eternal.

Following the literary precedent set by the great skeptic Abu al-ʿAlaʾ al-Maʿarri in his *Risālat al-Ghufrān* (The Epistle of Forgiveness), al-Wahrani envisions himself deceased and resurrected, navigating the throngs of the afterlife. It is here that he encounters a vivid procession of historical and contemporary figures: scholars and jurists, poets and kings, caliphs, ministers, and Sufis. His interactions with them become the vehicle for his distinctive authorial voice. He engages some in piercing dialogue while describing the states of others through a prose characterized by its critical edge, satirical wit, deliberate ambiguity, and a pervasive sense of the strange. Yet, where al-Wahrani diverges most profoundly from his predecessor is in his tone. He masterfully orchestrates his critique with a lightness and playfulness that stands in stark contrast to al-Maʿarri's style, which is distinguished by its solemnity, philosophical frankness, and deep inclination toward Sufi thought (Bouaziz, 1995, p. 190). Al-Wahrani's satire is not the grim pronouncement of a detached philosopher; rather, it is the sharp, nimble jest of a worldly observer who uses the ultimate stage of the Day of Judgment to unmask the terrestrial vanities and hypocrisies of the powerful. His ambiguity is not a sign of uncertainty, but a sophisticated rhetorical shield, allowing him to deliver incisive social commentary with an artist's flourish, thereby creating a work that is as entertaining as it is intellectually devastating.

1.4.Fourth: an excerpt from The Great Dream:

Al-Wahrani says in The Great Dream: "While we were in dialogue, behold, Malik, the keeper of the Fire, suddenly attacked us. He seized our hands, cast the chain about our necks, and dragged us toward the Fire; we trembled at this with great fear. I said to you, 'That which I warned you about has befallen us.' I then said to him, 'O my lord, O Malik, hear two words for the sake of God.' He replied to you, 'How can I listen to you when you have omitted a quarter of my effort in the call?' You answered, 'By God, I did not omit it to produce a laxity in the call acceptable to all grammarians; I am preoccupied with other matters, and I omitted it only because of extreme swallowing and the interruption of the flow of speech.' He said, 'Bring your two words; say what you wish to say.' You said, 'O my lord, this man is a Maghrebi and from the people of the Qurʾān, and I am a transmitter from the Messenger of God. By what crime will you take account of us before the Lord, may He be exalted, on the Day of Reckoning? Perhaps He will pardon us.' He said to you, 'My dear, you used to be one of those skilled in subtlety and tongue-twisting—those who wronged others.' I asked him, 'How is that, my lord?' He answered me, 'He used to corrupt the children of the Muslims,' and he said to you, 'You were... the children of the Muslims and their names are recorded in a register with you according to alphabetical order, so that little remains of them with you; your end approached while you were striving to hang the remaining letters. O you who brought ruin upon the darkened affairs and set him sleeping beneath the light of the windowpane—when the light did not illuminate his stone, I said to him with tenderness and mitigation, "O my lord, by your favor, O swine, what favor could there be from you, O wretch? Are you not the one who took Yahya al-Mutarraz and what befell you, and you remained deprived?" When I met him some time later I demanded completion from him, and if I were to enumerate for you the figures he saw yesterday in your lost register through time... As for this Maghrebi, he is a procurer, no doubt.' I then became enraged and displayed great fury, and I said to him, 'Is this the speech to be told about me? By God, you will regret this talk.' Malik said to me, 'Perhaps you wish to compose for me a poem like that which you saw in your registers today, or to produce a maqāmah in which you reproach me as you do with other people. By God, I will pull your tooth so hard that the Fendlāni will wet his own legs," and I longed to know the cause of your resentment toward him. Can you believe that you were not leading your companion that day at the turning-house in Habrūn in the year five hundred and fifty-three of the Hijra (2 February 1158) and (22 January 1159)? When we heard this, we fell silent and were struck dumb, and we realized that the critic is discerning and spares neither small nor great without having counted it; then we returned to pleasantries and questioning and said to him: "We asked you by God, do not hurry us; we will come to you shortly, and we have no refuge from you." After some difficulty we left him, entered among the crowd, and I said to you, "My brother, this tyrant has driven our minds away." An hour passed with him that would turn the young grey; he took us up to Mount al-A'raf so that you might look down upon the people of the Resurrection and behold the gardens of Paradise, whereby our chests would be comforted and our spirits would return to us in that place. Then you said to me: "Beware of doing that; for God's sake, beware within yourself." I said to you, "Why?" You replied, "Our despair in regard to the jinn is greater than our hope in them; whenever we see their trees and rivers and fail to enter them, our regrets and sorrows double, and the calamity of deprivation becomes immense. Better that such things be imagined than be present in reality; as the proverb says, 'An eye that does not see, a heart that does not grieve." (Al-Wahrani, 1968, p. 26)

You will attempt in this model to extract the enchantment of spontaneous narration and Satirical Criticism.

2. The Enchantment of the Fantastic Narrative in Rukn al-Dīn al-Wahrānī's Dream

The fantastic element is present in Rukn al-Dīn al-Wahrānī's dream through an unconventional narrative method in which the author makes extensive use of imagination, thereby creating a strange atmosphere imbued with tension and suspense. This marvelous atmosphere leads the reader to anticipate extraordinary events and opens multiple avenues for understanding and interpretation. Al-Wahrānī's narrative artistry lies in his ability to weave a tapestry of the surreal, where the boundaries between reality and illusion blur, compelling the reader into a state of intellectual unease. The prose, rich with metaphorical language and vivid imagery, elevates the dream from a mere sequence of events to a profound exploration of the human psyche. This literary approach not only sustains narrative tension but also enriches the text with symbolic layers, inviting critical inquiry into its deeper philosophical and existential implications. Todorov defined the fantastic in his book *Introduction to the Fantastic* as the hesitation experienced by a being who knows only natural laws when confronted, apparently, with a supernatural event. (Todorov, 1993, p. 47) This hesitation is the liminal space where al-Wahrānī's narrative thrives, leaving the reader perpetually suspended between belief and disbelief.

Todorov's notion finds embodiment in the dream, for example, in the dialogue with the Keeper of the Fire. The text opens with a magnificent and wondrous scene in which the author is brought before the Fire and confronted by a fiery being. This scene is not realistic; rather, it reflects an imaginative depiction of the Day of Judgment. The presence of unseen beings, such as the Keeper of the Fire, lends the text a supernatural, imaginative layer and summons significant religious symbolism that bestows upon the text a sacred awe, thereby entrenching the fantastic dimension through the presence of unseen entities and otherworldly locales. Likewise, the seamless transition between worlds—this is what astonishes in al-Wahrānī's dream—is the repeated and sudden movement between multiple realms: from the fire to a scene of the Reckoning, then to the scene of appearing before the King, without preliminaries or logical justifications. This interweaving of worlds, unbound by the laws of time and space, imparts a distinctly oneiric quality to the text and constantly makes the reader question whether what transpires is real or imagined.The narrative eschews a reality-bound logic, favoring instead transitions akin to the fluid, often disorienting movement within a dreamscape. How does a dreamer arrive in a new scene? The passage is rarely known, only the sudden fact of the new location. This very technique profoundly amplifies the text's fantastical nature and showcases al-Wahrānī's deft manipulation of the nebulous states between waking and slumber. A striking feature emerges in the form of direct addresses to unseen personages; the dream unfurls through dialogues between the author and transcendent figures—the Keeper of the Fire, a King, and an anonymous, disembodied voice that punctuates the act of accounting. These are not characters drawn from life. Rather, they inhabit an unseen realm, a choice that infuses the text with a pervasive strangeness and deepens its enigmatic allure.

Furthermore, a critical examination reveals the distortion and displacement of temporality and location as paramount features of the fantastic mode in al-Wahrānī's dream. This manifests as a peculiar warping of conventional concepts of time and space. Consider the pronouncement made to the writer: "If I were to recount to you the adjacent [thing] that I saw yesterday in your newspaper, time would have judged you." What can such a statement imply? It strongly suggests that the chronology of the dream operates on a plane entirely separate from reality. Within this domain, a single day might encompass the breadth of a lifetime, and settings may shift abruptly, without any

semblance of logical progression. This fundamental alteration of spatio-temporal laws serves as confirmation that the text navigates a liberated, autonomous realm, one unbound by the predictable statutes of everyday existence.

3. Satirical Criticism

Al-Wahrani's creative arsenal extends beyond the mere deployment of imagination and the fantastical; he wields a potent satirical mode to dissect the mores and institutions of his society. A conspicuous strategy is the fusion of solemn religious parlance with a satirical register, a technique that masterfully throws into relief the chasm between professed ideals and actual conduct. Through the narrative vehicle of the dream, al-Wahrani meticulously exposes the vulnerabilities of influential social echelons—figures such as scholars, judicators, and administrators—yet he executes this critique with a nuanced irony and a sophisticated artistic subtlety.

The very essence of al-Wahrani's narrative genius is located in his virtuosic manipulation of satire, which he uses as a scalpel to probe the socio-religious anatomy of his epoch. He, for instance, artfully lampoons the ostentatious piety of scholars and preachers. In a particularly incisive passage, a question is raised concerning an individual: "Is this the one who corrupted the children of the Muslims?" (Todorov, 1993, p. 29). This interrogative, cloaked in the grave vestments of a religious inquest, is, in actuality, a finely calibrated instrument of derision. It ingeniously co-opts the discourse of devoutness to unmask the precise corruption it feigns to condemn. Herein, al-Wahrani illuminates the glaring hypocrisy of certain religious personages who assiduously construct an outward appearance of repentance while covertly engaging in profligacy—a quintessential exhibition of literary irony where the phenomenal starkly diverges from the noumenal.

Viewed through this satirical optic, he lays bare a rampant religious hypocrisy, demonstrating how personalities celebrated by the community's elite as exemplars of virtue are, themselves, mired in depravity. What, then, is al-Wahrani's literary undertaking? It is not a mere critique of individuals, but a profound challenge to the institutionalized sanctity that insulates them from accountability. By situating these characters in scenarios of comical yet damning revelation, he engineers the implosion of their meticulously fabricated aura of holiness. This calculated desacralization of religious authority emerges as a persistent leitmotif in his oeuvre. Irony, in his hands, is no blunt cudgel; rather, it is a sophisticated literary implement that delicately excises layers of pretense, thereby exposing the moral putrescence festering beneath a veneer of religious fervor. The rhetorical force of his prose emanates from this precise tension—the disjuncture between the sacred lexicon he appropriates and the profane realities he unveils—forging a narrative that is as intellectually penetrating as it is artistically seductive. His work transforms into a speculum, reflecting the discomfiting verity of a society where piety is frequently a performance rather than an authentic state of being, leveraging the very idiom of the sacred to desecrate the false idols of his era.

He likewise criticizes religious and scholarly authority when someone describes a man as "a Moroccan man from the people of the Qur'an. He spoke about the Messenger of God, peace be upon him." (Todorov, 1993, p. 30) This characterization is accompanied by a scene that reveals this person's deviant behavior, thereby highlighting the paradox between an appearance of

righteousness and an inner corruption. Al-Wahrani does not stop at mere critique; he demonstrates that this individual does not deserve such status, for the religious description does not accord with his conduct—herein lies the satire between the image society presents and the truth al-Wahrani uncovers.

Al-Wahrani's literary prowess is particularly evident in his incisive satire targeting judges and administrators, where he masterfully exposes systemic decay. A quintessential satirical example is the king's paradoxical remark: "This is the one whose case I took up, and he did not appear before you and went to you" (Todorov, 1993, p. 30). This statement, in its deliberate absurdity, transcends mere comedy to become a profound social critique. It brilliantly captures the convoluted and corrupt nature of a judicial bureaucracy where logic is inverted, and favoritism supplants due process. Al-Wahrani employs verbal irony to ridicule the farcical state of injustice within courts and administrations, where the king's personal intervention renders legal proceedings meaningless. The line's nonsensical structure mirrors the irrationality of a system detached from justice. Through such caustic wit and sophisticated rhetorical imagery, Al-Wahrani does not merely mock individuals but rather dissects and condemns the moral and ethical collapse of the institutions they represent, cementing his status as a formidable social critic.

The satirical language embedded in dialogue uses dream-phrases such as "this is the one your newspaper served you on" or "by God, you will repent for this speech," and although their surface seems to carry a judicial or administrative tone, the context in which they are uttered lends them a clearly derisive edge that mocks bureaucratic routine and the veneer of propriety that does not fit the moment of Egyptian reckoning.

Many phrases in the *Manam / dream* carry dual meanings. For example, the sentence, "This is the one whose record you sealed" (Todorov, 1993, p. 31), appears administrative. However, in context, it refers to empty bureaucracy. Similarly, the phrase, "By God, you will regret these words" (Todorov, 1993, p. 31), might seem serious, but it is uttered in a way that evokes sarcasm.

In this manner, Al-Wahrani uses language to amuse the reader while simultaneously prompting them to reflect on the corruption of reality.

From the foregoing, it is evident that Rukn al-Din al-Wahrani did not write The Great Dream merely for entertainment. Rather, he employed the fantastic narrative as a means to convey an important critical message. What emerges from his work is a curious paradox. Through an extraordinary alchemy of phantasmagorical imagination and mordant satire, the author meticulously dissects the pathologies of his milieu—the pervasive corruption and sanctimony tainting the era's religious, judicial, and administrative spheres. The result is a narrative cloaked in a deceptively jocular facade; a surface-level entertainment that, upon closer inspection, reveals a profound and unsparing critique of the world he inhabited.

Conclusion

- Rukn al-Din al-Wahrani's legacy within Algerian prose is cemented not merely by his prominence, but by the audacious satirical style he so deftly wielded. His was a language sharp enough to dissect social and religious hypocrisy, yet profound in its underlying commentary. It is within his seminal work, *The Great Dream*, that this fusion of fantastic imagination and incisive

social criticism culminates, forging a potent artistic vision that interrogates the contradictions of his time.

- Al-Wahrani's strategic deployment of the fantastic—a narrative built from the very fabric of dreams and surreal visions—serves a dual purpose. It creates an alluring, almost unsettling, strangeness that ensnares the reader's curiosity. But is it mere escapism? Scarcely. This dreamscape becomes a disarming realm that compels contemplation, forcing the audience to decipher the urgent meanings veiled by the bizarre.
- This fantastical veneer, however, barely conceals a biting satirical undercurrent. The text's true power is unleashed in its unflinching critique of the clerical establishment, compromised judges, and corrupt figures of authority. Al-Wahrani masterfully mocks the absurdities of his reality while remaining firmly within a sophisticated literary framework. Thus, to label *The Great Dream* as a simple work of fantasy would be to overlook its core function. It is, more accurately, a subversive critical text where the instruments of literature and imagination are weaponized, revealing deep-seated societal decay through the intelligent and penetrating tool of satire, which engages the mind and the soul in equal measure.

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